



- [Thoughts on the Schools' Capital Facilities Task Force:](#) The Task Force was created by the Board of Supervisors and the School Board to tackle future capital challenges. The Task Force meets for the first time tomorrow, find out my thoughts on addressing those challenges below.
- [What Do You Think of Our Schools?:](#) FCPS has released a survey to gauge public opinion on how our schools are operated and if they are efficient. Please take a few minutes to share your thoughts with them.
- [VDOT Public Meeting on the Stringfellow Road Widening Project Tomorrow:](#) Join me at the meeting tomorrow night for a presentation by VDOT on the project, at 7pm in the library of Chantilly High School.
- [Ride the Express Lanes for Free this Weekend:](#) The 495 Express Lanes will be free of charge this weekend. Take this opportunity to familiarize yourself with the way they work, and take advantage of the new exits they provide. More details below.
- [Get Your Fairfax County License Plate Online Today:](#) Visit Fairfax have now made the Fairfax County license plate application 100% digital, meaning no forms to print or mail in. Visit <http://www.fxva.com/plates/electronic> to order yours today.

Thoughts on the Schools' Capital Facilities Task Force

In order to address the critical issue of capital improvement needs for the public schools, the Board of Supervisors created a Joint Capital Facilities Task Force which is examining ways to tackle future capital challenges along with the School Board. The first meeting, which was announced yesterday, will take place tomorrow at 3pm in room 232 of the Fairfax County Government Center.

The capital needs of the public school system are great, and there are several commonsense improvements that can be made to begin to address the growing list of

needs. Since taking office in 2008, I have made CIP reform and funding a top priority. In 2010 I led efforts to keep the school bonding capacity at \$155 million per year, instead of reducing it back to its original level of \$130 million. Below are several other proposals that I have put forward in the past to tackle this problem that I hope the Task Force will be discussing.

Speeding Up the Permitting Process: To put it succinctly - time is money. The longer school projects sit in the land development and permitting process, the more expensive and the longer to completion the project becomes. I believe there are ways schools and the County can work to reduce the time and cost of the process.

Reducing the Costs of School Construction and Renovation: In order to deal with the capital improvement needs for FCPS, and the County in general, we need to look at every means available to reduce the cost of construction and renovation. In addition to increasing the overall cost of projects, adding bells and whistles to buildings takes more time, and adds significant ongoing maintenance and operation costs to the facility. It is absolutely critical that our schools meet the needs of today, while planning for the needs of tomorrow. However, I believe building one Cadillac school at the cost of building two Chevy schools is not the proper approach.

Investigating the Practices of our Neighboring Jurisdictions: We live in a dynamic region with each local government having its own approach to tackling many of the same issues. It is prudent to take the best practices from other jurisdictions and incorporate what makes sense. In the case of capital improvements, we can borrow best practices from our neighbors and adapt them to fit our County.

Schools Should be a Priority in Proffers: Proffers, or certain requirements of developers made in exchange for them being granted development rights, can include a laundry list of developer contributions. Recently we have been requiring proffers on developers that do not address our critical needs such as public safety, schools, and transportation. Instead we are requiring developer contributions for bird-proof buildings, excessive stormwater management, and housing for people making up to \$130,000 a year. We should focus our proffer dollars on our priorities.

Using the Design Build Process: In 2010 I met with County and FCPS staff to look at ways to accelerate the renovation timeline by bonding at a higher capacity and pushing through a large volume of projects. Unfortunately, when FCPS was asked to produce a list of projects that were ready to begin immediately, all that was returned was a single elementary school because they were not designed. The practice employed by FCPS to complete these projects is not always the most efficient use of resources and should be modified to a design build approach where it makes sense. By adopting design build, the length of projects will be significantly reduced because the design phase runs concurrently with the build phase. Under the current policies, design work takes years, and no construction begins until design has been completed. For example, The five "Legacy

High Schools", Herndon, Langley, Falls Church, Oakton, and Edison were built around the same time and are of the same model. Instead of redesigning each of these schools, a design build approach based on the renovation at Edison could be employed, saving time and money.

Please let me know your thoughts.

What Do You Think of Our Schools?

It is no secret that Fairfax County has some of the best schools in the country, and that is something that we should be proud of. That doesn't mean we shouldn't be looking to improve the way our schools operate, and the way your tax dollars are being spent.

During my time on the Board I have been an advocate for keeping our schools the best by focusing our resources into the classroom, and on our teachers.

Many of you share your opinions with me, and I would urge you to take the time to complete the survey below being conducted by FCPS so you can share your thoughts with the school system. It is open to all members of the public. You can find it here - <http://www.fcpsurvey.com/>, the deadline for submission of comments is **April 12th**.

Join Me Tomorrow at a VDOT Pardon Our Dust Meeting on the Stringfellow Road Widening Project

The Virginia Department of Transportation will be hosting a community meeting tomorrow, Wednesday, **April 3**, to give residents an opportunity to view and discuss the plans and impacts associated with the project to widen Stringfellow Road from two to four lanes between Fair Lakes Boulevard and Route 50.

VDOT representatives from the project team will be available to answer any questions that may arise. The meeting starts at **7 pm** and is being held in the **library of Chantilly High School located at 4201 Stringfellow Road**.

Stringfellow Road will be widened from two lanes to four lanes, separated by a 16-foot concrete median. The project also includes:

- Five to six foot wide sidewalk on the west side of Stringfellow Road and a ten foot wide path on the east side.
- Wide curb lanes to accommodate bicyclists.
- A new bridge over Rocky Run.
- Drainage improvements.
- Landscaping.
- Adding a left-turn lane northbound to Route 50, and
- Modifying the southbound approach to Route 50 to improve traffic flow.

During the first year of construction, crews will build a northbound detour road parallel to Stringfellow Road between Melville Lane and Point Pleasant Drive. Crews will also construct the first section of a new bridge over Big Rocky Run, and build the ultimate southbound lanes of Stringfellow Road.

Stringfellow Road carries about 23,000 vehicles per day, and is expected to increase to 33,000 in 2034.

More information on the project is available at www.virginia.gov/projects/northernvirginia/stringfellow_road.asp

Express Lanes Free This Weekend

If you've wanted to try the 495 Express Lanes, but haven't yet, get ready for the perfect opportunity. All day on April 6 and 7, you can practice using the Express Lanes as often as you would like for free.

This weekend, no E-ZPass is required to travel on the road. In fact, even if you do have an E-ZPass, you won't be charged a toll.

This is a great opportunity to test your commute to the office, or explore new exits in Merrifield at Route 29 and in Tysons at Westpark and Jones Branch. See what it's like to experience a faster, more predictable trip every time.

Remember to "know before you go" by using this mapping tool (<https://www.495expresslanes.com/map/>) to plan your Express Lanes trip today, and find more information at <https://www.495expresslanes.com/FreeWeekend>.

Get Your Fairfax County License Plate Online Today

At the beginning of the year, the Board of Supervisors approved my request to seek the production of a license plate for Fairfax County; proceeds will fund the [World Police and Fire Games](#) the County is hosting in 2015, and tourism development. With the help of Visit Fairfax, those who would like to order a plate may now do so completely online and do not need to print or mail anything. To view the plate design, and to apply online, go to <http://www.fxva.com/plates/electronic/>